

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 3835

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT EC ELAB
SUBJ: GOE STANDS FIRM ON TEACHERS' STRIKE

REF: (A) QUITO 3446; (B) QUITO 3545

1. MARKED BY SPORADIC DEMONSTRATIONS AND VIOLENCE (TWO DEATHS, NUMBEROUS INJURIES AND ARRESTS) THE SALARY-MOTIVATED NATIONAL TEACHERS' STRIKE BEGUN MAY 18 CONTINUES WITH NO SIGN OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOE AND STRIKING TEACHERS. THE GOVERNMENT HAS ISSUED AN ULTIMATUM TO THE EFFECT THAT IF THE TEACHERS DO NOT RETURN TO WORK BY JUNE 13, SCHOOLS WILL EITHER BE DECLARED OFFICIALLY ENDED.

THE GOVERNMENT CONTINUES ITS THREAT THAT STRIKERS WILL SUFFER THE FULL PENALTIES OF THE LAW (I.E., DISMISSAL AND TWO TO FIVE YEARS IN JAIL) IF THEY DO NOT CALL OFF THE STRIKE AND RETURN TO WORK.

2. THE STRIKE HAS CONTINUED LONGER THAN MOST OBSERVERS BELIEVED POSSIBLE WITH NO SIGN OF THE SURRENDER OF EITHER PARTY. AS THE STRIKE CONTINUES, HOWEVER, THE MORE IT BECOMES A PUBLIC QUESTION. VIRTUALLY ALL NATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATIONS AND STUDENT GROUPS HAVE COME OUT IN SUPPORT OF THE TEACHERS AND POLITICAL PARTIES ARE BEGINNING TO MAKE PRONOUNCEMENTS AND TAKE SIDES. ALTHOUGH THE PARTIES ARE DIVIDED IN THEIR VIEWS, MOST TAKING A POSITION HAVE SUPPORTED THE TEACHERS--OR AT LEAST OPPOSING
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THE GOE'S METHOD OF DEALING WITH THEM.

3. UNE ITSELF RASIED THE POLITICAL STAKES OF THE STRIKE WHEN IT PUBLICLY ACCUSED A MEMBER OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENT (READ GENERAL DURAN) OF MANUEVERING TO TAKE SOLE CONTROL OF THE GOVERNMENT. UNE TIED THE CURRENT GOE HARD-LINE AGAINST LABOR TO THESE AMBITIONS. THE GOVERNMENT TOOK

UNE'S ACCUSATIONS SERIOUSLY ENOUGH FOR HUGO GARCES, SECRETARY
GENERAL OF ADMINISTRATION, TO PUBLICLY DENY THE UNE ACCUSATION.

4. THE GOE HAS BEGUN ISSUING STATEMENTS THAT MANY TEACHERS
ARE RETURNING TO WORK, BUT THIS VIEW IS LOUDLY REFUTED BY
UNE. GIVEN THE TAKING OF SIDES OF A BROAD SPECTRUM OF
INTEREST GROUPS AND POLITICAL PARTIES FAILURE TO RESOLVE THE
QUESTION COULD PLACE POLITICAL STRAINS ON THE GOE.
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Message Attributes

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